

later
5/13/37

The report of the Social Work Committee has to do in general with the activities in this House aside from those of the Nursery and Music School departments and in particular with the 48,659 boys and girls, young men and young women who last year participated in these activities. The word "report", however, is far too formal a term for this paper. It is, rather, an attempt to paint for you the picture you would have beheld had you dropped in at 3:30 o'clock any week day in 1936 and remained until 10 o'clock when the lights were finally lowered and a last reluctant figure had closed behind him the front door.

You would have seen boys and girls arriving in increasing numbers-ready for after-school fun at the Neighborhood House. In the front hall they pause to buy some penny candy from members of the Girl Scout Troop who are thus raising much-needed funds. In the library, to the right, children of various ages return and select books, use reference books for school assignments, and sit at long tables acquainting themselves with the better current magazines. A bulletin board keeps them posted on the week's outstanding events not only in the House but in the neighborhood and city as well. Had you continued your tour you would have been well rewarded for the long climb to the third floor, for there you would have come upon groups happily occupied with educational as well as recreational activities.

In one room, knitting and purling absorb their interest; in another, the intricacies of a French seam are being unfolded in a class in "dolls costuming"; in others, story-telling, dramatics, arts and crafts, hobbies and shop are in progress according to

schedule. Down in the gymnasium, tap-dancing, the perennial favorite, is in full swing. And still lower down (for this House has endless proportions) a class in cooking thrives-for it has been discovered that what one cooks here one eats, and good things to eat are ever welcome.

Evening activities necessarily attract an older group, ranging from 9 to 25 years of age. There are young men's social clubs, 12 basketball teams, a Girl Scout and a Boy Scout troop, a radio club, girls' sororities, classes in wood craft, an operetta club, and once again, the favorite gymnasium sports.

Thus, a miniature of a Neighborhouse day. But the picture is not complete. There are other days when even more exciting events take place. For example, there are the holidays-Hallowe'en, Hanukkah, Purim, Valentines Day-when parties, including entertainment and refreshments, make life a jolly affair. There are the summer outings to a nearby pool, sight-seeing trips through such interesting buildings as the Fischer Baking Company and the Newark Evening News, the latter having been arranged in connection with a house newspaper called the "Gossiper", completely compiled and edited by the children.

Such events are not daily fare, but rather fall within the category of "special events". Frequently Neighborhood House boys and girls are the recipients of treats by generous individuals and organizations. There was the occasion when the Boys Work Directors Council presented 60 boys with free tickets to see the Newark Bears in the International League game. Free moving pictures are occasionally shown by the Bell Telephone Company and the Public Service. In

In June, the Junior League of the United Order of True Sisters arranged a picnic for 51 children. Turkeys were donated for Thanksgiving dinner. Friends of the House often provide the traditional "Cake and ice-cream" in celebration of children's and grandchildren's birthdays. The Kiwanis Club of Newark has, for each national holiday in 1936, sent bags of candy.

Eleven years ago the House was the birthplace of the "Livingston Players", an amateur dramatic group now well-known in the city. They are talented young men and women who are seriously interested in developing their art. Their most recent performance was Clifford Odets "Awake and Sing" which they presented recently in Fuld Hall. The House is especially proud of this offspring whom it has nourished through infancy and in whose ultimate success it has great confidence.

The picture is almost complete-but not quite, When statistics for 1936 show a total attendance for the afternoon of 26,899 and a total attendance for the evening of 21,760, it is patent that there is a vital force behind the scenes. There is more than one force; there are many. Community chest and memorial funds lay the foundation. A Board of Directors of 35 women has served for 31 years. One non-resident and five resident staff members who are trained in social service and who have an inherent love for their work are at the helm, under the direction of Miss Josephine Miller, headworker for 24 years. Her record is one that will live not only in memory but also in the permanent history of social service in Newark. And finally there is the Social Work Committee which meets once a month with the staff and president of the Board. This meeting is a clearing-house for ideas. Problems that have arisen during the preceding month are discussed,

volunteer group leaders are procured. Many members of this committee are themselves leaders of successful groups. But above all it functions most effectively when it plans for the future, for in this it extends the scope of the work of this House, increasing its service to the community. New projects under consideration at the moment are a junior art gallery, a debating team, a girls and boys council, a fathers' club, a children's entertainment series, and a class in English for foreign-born men and women.

I cannot conclude without a word of thanks to the fifty afternoon and evening leaders who gratuitously conduct the classes I have described, nor without a word of my predecessor, Mrs. Albert Blumgart, who served as chairman of this committee for 12 years. Her vision and enthusiasm brought about many of the now well-established activities in the House.

I wish also to thank my committee for their support and for their faith in the worth and value of the work that is done here. To paraphrase a familiar quotation, "the world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but we are confident it will never forget what they do here."

Holence L. Whitefield
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